

tall tales of wood nymphs and satyrs
that you wouldn't believe and shouldn't,
but they earned me As on my school
compositions, and in Art the teacher
looked at my novel designs, nodded
and said, "How very creative!"

Now they have sold the home, rolled up
the rugs and carted them away. But they
are woven into my bones, knitted into
my nerves and hooked into every cell.

ROCKHOUNDING

The lower left hand
corner of a Breughel, I sit
on a rock surrounded by
broken slabs of slate, discards
from others' fossil finds.
Down the draw a mile or two
dust swirls across the dry
lake bed. Overhead a jet
too high to hear. Center stage
hammers ring on rock. Hunters circle
the mountain as others pry out
shale, lifting layers for
inch-long trilobites. To the right
wives sip coffee at camp tables
gossip and plan the next meal
while children watch parents
or play. Idly, I flip
through fragments and find
(outside the frame)
the perfect specimen.

-- Helen Hope Colgan

Carnelian Bay CA

SOCIAL

Today I walked in and took a seat at the end of the
counter and opened my newspaper and the man next to me
saw me reading about the Rams-Buccaneer game coming
up. "I'd like to see Tampa beat the Rams," he said.

I told the man that I always liked it when the Rams lost but I couldn't see them losing three straight, then I gave my order to the waitress and then I turned to the race results. "I'm a good friend of Henry Moreno's," he said, "he gives me tips. You know he was a drunk for 5 or 6 years, he's all straightened out now." I told him that I had read that in the papers. "I'm going to the races Sunday," he said, "I've got a hot tip." I told him I was trying to stay away from the races today, that I was fighting to stay away, and then my order came: tuna fish sandwich. "You remember 2 or 3 years ago?" he asked, "they said swordfish had lead in them. Maybe it was mercury. I catch my own tuna and can them, costs me 45 cents a can to can my tuna, it's a real rip-off." His order came. "Look at that hamburger," he said, "how the hell you gonna get your mouth around that?" "I'm not," I told him. He got quiet with the mouthfuls and I turned to the front page. "The market," I said before he could, "went up 35 points in one day. How the hell's a man gonna figure on a thing like that?" "The brokers don't know," he answered, "the analysts don't know, the investors don't know, nobody knows" "Somebody must know," I said. "Nobody knows," he said. "I mean," I suggested, "somebody somewhere must know ... one guy, maybe" "Nobody knows," he said.

When he finished his sandwich he picked up his bill. "Well, it was nice talking to you," he said. "Sure," I said, "take it easy."

People like that used to give me nervous fits and depressions for four or five hours after meeting them. Now I act just like they do, it's easy.

The waitress came up: "care for another coffee?" I told her yes, that would be nice and as she walked away I looked at her ass as if I were quite interested in it. It's best to keep acting normal, to hide in the crowd and stay out of sight, and the best way to hide is to act like everybody else. She came back with the coffee. "Care for a pie or something?" she asked. I told her, "naw, gotta keep the waistline down." She said, "ah, come on, ya only live once...." "O.k.," I said, "I'll take the blueberry with a scoop of vanilla"

As she walked away again I stared at her ass.

INTERVIEW

are you getting mellow? he asked.

yes, I said.